NIMBALKARS OF PHALTAN

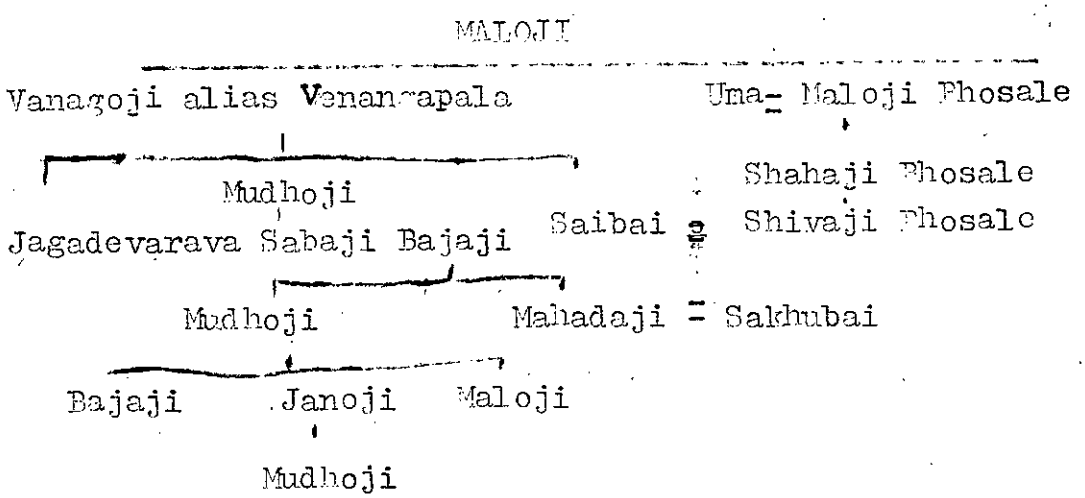
Prof. G.H.Khare, Pune

1. Nimbalkar of Phaltan (District Satara) is a well known, very old Maratha family originating in the pre-Shivaji period i.e. in the 16th century at least, if not earlier. The family claims its descent from the Paramaras of Malwa and therefore bore the surname Pawar originally. This family has a very long line of ancestors which it is difficult to believe in, unless supported by original genuine records. It is, however, certain that Maloji Bhosale, the grand-father of Shivaji, the great, had his wife by name Uma from this family. The Bhosale family of Shivaji, the great, had first its devotion towards Ghrsnesvara, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas of India, known to Hindus in general and Saivas in particular, as Babaji Bhosale, the great-grand-father of Shivaji lived in the same village, where Ghrsnesvara is enshrined; but after the marriage of Maloji with Uma, in addition to that of Ghrsnesvara this Bhosale family began to have devotion towards god Siva of Sikhara Singanapur (District Satara) which is at a short distance (say 32 K.M) to the South of Phaltan.

2. The god Siva of this place is said to have migrated from Saurastra and is, therefore, another form of Somanatha of Saurastra. When this god migrated to Sikhara Singanapur, situated on a high spur of the Sahya range, there was no water to drink and no trees to sit under their shade there. It was all a barren plateau. But out of singular devotion to this god, Maloji excavated a tank at this place to be filled in with rain water. Maloji's son Shahji, Shivaji, the great, and his descendents had the same kind of devotion towards this god as shown by Maloji; and Shahaji managed to get the township of this place as inam to him from the then Adilshah of Bijapur, in order that the best arrangements of the worship of that god could be made. Shivaji had his senior most wife Saibai from this very Nimbalkar family and he got his daughter born of Saibai married to Mahadaji, the son of Bajaji Nimbalkar his brother-in-law. Though Bhosale family was thus closely related to this Nimbalkar family by matrimonial connections both Shahaji and Shivaji, the great, had to fight with some members of this family for reasons unknown.

3. Raja Maloji Naik Nimbalkar, the present male heir of that family and the president of the general body of the Bharata Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala, Poona twice or thrice remarked, when I met him, that he had entrusted the Persian records in his possession to the Mandala. Every time I was rather vexed, as I was under the impression that in my long service in the Mandala I had never come across those records. But this year, the caretaker of the archives of the Mandala, all of a sudden brought to my notice a bundle of records which belonged to this family. When I began to examine them, I found that they were numbered in my own hand. But somehow or other, I altogether forgot the fact that our president had handed over these documents to the Mandala. This collection has in it 16 documents, out of which one is a Marathi one, in modi script and the remaining 15 are in Persian. But of these 15 Persian documents 8 are Adilshahi farmans (Nos. 13, 11, 10, 12, 8, 7, 14, 9) and seven are Mughal ones (Nos. 3, 5, 1, 4, 6, 2, 15). Though the ancestors of the Nimbalkar family had tried their best to preserve these documents by backing almost all with silk cloth, a number of these documents have given way and are torn to pieces. I had to paste them together with great difficulty.

4. I give below the pedigree of this family useful for knowing the documents better,



5. The earliest of these records (No.13) is an Adilshahi farman dated the 9th of Rajjab 1044 H. (20th December 1634 A.D) and bears the seal of Muhammad Adilshah. Its purport runs thus: Muhammadkhan should know that he has been ordered to proceed with his cavalry

in excess of the number 75, to help Mudho Pandita. He should, therefore, immediately on receipt of this farman report himself with his cavalry to Mudho Pandita. He should, in co-operation with that Pandita, render commendable service to this Kingdom which will result in his prosperity. He should well remember that it would be to his discredit if he hesitates and delays in abiding by this farman.

6. The next (No.11) is also an Adilshahi farman dated the 14th of Shawwal 1049 H. (28th January 1640). Here Bajaji, the Desai of pargana Phaltan has been ordered thus. At present the representative of Bahlulkhan has represented to the Court that this Pargana was given to the above mentioned Khan; but Bajaji with the help of 150 horsemen and infantry as well as the Patels and Kulkarnis of the Pargana has closed the boundaries of the pargana and would not allow any government work to be done by him. What an impertinence is this? Immediately on receipt of this farman he should recede back his steps and allow the servants of Bahlulkhan to do their duties.

7. Next in order (No.10) is an Adilshahi farman dated 13 Rabi-ul-awwal 1040 H. (23rd June 1040 A.D.). This farman is addressed to Bajaji (Nimbalkar) and is to the following effect. Bajaji has been conferred on the Sardeshmukhi and Sarnadgaudaki of the pargana of Phaltan on condition of paying as nazar 175 hons for the former right and 75 hons for the latter right, thus 250 hons all together.

8. No.12 is also an Adilshahi farman and is dated 1 Shawwal 1050 H. (3rd January 1641 A.D.). In this farman Bajaji, the Desai of the pargana of Phaltan included in that of Kalhar (Karad dist Satara) has been ordered, as decided before, to pay as salary to the six goldsmiths connected with the treasury and one servant connected with the elephant stables, as per the following details:- Channamal Viranna 300 Hons, Basavanna 250 Hons, Girmaji Timaji 100 Hons and Vanaskankar Narayan, Kankanna Gondia and Naganna Sivappa 50 Hons each. Thus all total 1000 Hons. Now you pay these amounts to the respective persons.

9. The next Adilshahi farman (no.8) has been addressed to the officers and Desais of the pargana of Phaltan included in that of Kalhar (Karad, Dist. Satara) and is dated the 19th of Shaban, Shuhur Year 1042 (13th November 1641 A.D.). This farman

relates thus: The pargana of Phaltan has been taken back from Sabaji Mudhoji Nimbalkar and has been given to Bajaji Mudhoji Nimbalkar as before. But it has not as yet been given in possession of Bajaji. The miras of the Desgat (Desaigiri) of this pargana though given to Bajaji, you are not giving charge of the same to him. What a daring act is this? Immediately on receipt of this farman you should hand over this pargana to Bajaji and all the Government duties of Desaigiri should be accomplished through him as per rules. The amount to be taken as nazar from him should be handed over to the goldsmiths connected with the treasury. Moreover, Manhoji, the Patel of Dargaon has revolted and foiled trouble with the help of Sabaji (Nimbalkar). You should chastise him so that he revolts not again.

10. The next Adilshahi farman (No.7) is dated the 8th of Ramadan 1051 H. (2nd December 1641 A.D.) and is addressed to the officers of the pargana of Phaltan. Its gist runs thus: Mudhoji, the son of Vanangapala, Desai and Sardesai of the above mentioned pargana has applied to the Court and intimated him that having assembled his dependents gave out his intention that he wished to partition his belongings and his Watan among his sons, so that they should not have any plausible cause for family feud. Jagadevarao and Sabaji the eldest and the youngest sons respectively got the belongings, horses, elephants, treasury, precious stones and clothes; Bajaji was given the Desagat and the Sardesagat and the service to the government without partitioning. Documents were prepared and were seen by the Court. Now the above mentioned Desagat, Sardesagat and patelgis have been conferred on Bajaji without any right to the property of the two brothers. Here are given the details of what Bajaji received. All this should be continued to Bajaji; Jagadevarao and Sabaji had no rights in the possessions of Bajaji.

11. No.14 is also an Adilshahi farman dated the 10th Ziqada 1051 H. (31st January 1642 A.D.). Herein Bajaji Nimbalkar has been ordered thus: As Anbar of Dandarajapuri has revolted, Asadkhan has been specially appointed on that affair (for quenching the revolt). Bajaji should report to the Khan with all haste and take part in the expedition. He will be awarded all that which the Khan would recommend to this Court after taking into account his devoted service to the cause.

12. No. 9 is the last Adilshahi farman and is dated the 29th Rajjab 1063 H. (16th June 1653 A.D.). This farman has been addressed to the Hawaldar, Mankun and other officers and connected others. In this record it is said that presently Bajaji Naik Nimbalkar represented to the Court that he was holding the Deshmukhi and Sardesai as miras (hereditary occupation) as also an inam of 5 villages and 4 Chavars of land each in 16 villages. But now the officers ask for a new farman to the above effect. This petition of his was taken into consideration and he has been given the said miras and inam. The officers should continue this miras and inam to him as before.

13. No.3 and 5 are two Mughal farman dated 5 Jamadi-ul-akhir regnal year 45 of Almgir I (26th October 1701 A.D.). The first is addressed to Malu (Maloji Nimbalkar) and the second to Paja (Bajaji Nimbalkar). Both of them have the same gist as follows:- At present you have requested through Munim Khan that you wish to beg pardon for your own past offences and you wish to serve the emperor with all devotion after repenting for the past deeds. You should at once come to the Court upon which your sins and mistakes would be pardoned and you would be honoured with a deserving mansab and the present of a horse and an elephant.

14. No.1 and No.4 are also Mughal farmans dated the 30th Rabi-ul-akhir regnal year 4 of Shah Alam I (31st May 1710 A.D.). The first is addressed to Bajaji and the second to Janoji (both Nimbalkars) and they purport to the same effect thus: Your petition has been seen by the emperor. After imperial favour has been honoured with 5000 Zat and 5000 Savar as also with highly priced dress, horse, elephant, drum banner and Rs. fifty thousand in cash. You should be thankful for this. You should report to Daudkhan (Panni), the subahdar of the Deccan and show progress in imperial service. Nusratjang will represent to the Court about the favour of jagir etc. to be given to your relatives and other accompanying persons.

15. No.6 is also a Mughal farman dated 20 Rabi-ul-akhir regnal year 1 of Shah Alam I and is addressed to Janu (Janoji Nimbalkar). Its gist runs thus: Your request about devoted service in the past and in the future has been gone through, and your expectations have been noted. Hidayatkishkhan has been

ordered to pay attention to your points. On receiving this farman you should see me with your expectations and you will be rewarded with imperial favour.

16. No.2 is a Mughal farman dated 29th Rajjab- of regnal year 7 of Ahmad Shah. Its purport runs thus: The pargana of Phaltan included in the Sarkar of Raibag and the Subah of Bijapur was given as inam to Mahadaji Nimbalkar in the reign of Khuldmakan (Alamgir I). Presently it is in the possession of his progeny. Now it should be continued in the name of Mudhoji the son of Janoji and the grandson of Mahadaji.

17. No.15 appears to be a Mughal document; but it is so much torn that it is impossible to make out any meaning of the document even when the torn portions are pieced together.